

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claims 1-14 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the recited subject matter.

Please ADD new claims 15 and 16, as follows. For the Examiner's convenience, all claims currently presented are reproduced below.

1-14. (Canceled)

15. (New) A method of designing an exposure mask for exposing an image forming layer provided on a substrate, by use of near field light leaking from adjoining openings formed in a light blocking member, the method comprising:

determining a width D of the openings and an opening interval of the openings to be formed in the light blocking member,

wherein a relation $D \leq (P - W - 2T)$ is satisfied, where T is the height of a pattern to be produced by the image forming layer, W is the linewidth of the pattern and P is the pitch of the pattern, so that an electrical field distribution, adjacent to the opening of the light blocking member as exposure light is projected on the light blocking member, is approximated to an electrical field model extending circularly concentric with an edge of the light blocking member at an image forming layer side as a center.

16. (New) An exposure method of manufacturing an exposure mask for exposing an image forming layer provided on a substrate, by use of near field light leaking from adjoining openings formed in a blocking member, the method comprising:

determining a width D of the openings and an opening interval of the openings to be formed in the light blocking member; and

processing the light blocking member so as to obtain the width D and the opening interval,

wherein a relation $D \leq (P - W - 2T)$ is satisfied, where T is the height of a pattern to be produced by the image forming layer, W is the linewidth of the pattern and P is the pitch of the pattern, so that an electrical field distribution, adjacent to the opening of the light blocking member as exposure light is projected on the light blocking member, is approximated to an electrical field model extending circularly concentric with an edge of the light blocking member at an image forming layer side as a center.